



**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
National Medicare Multi-Media & Education Campaign
Drop-in article (253 words)**

Using Your Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

As the New Year begins, people with Medicare who have already joined a Medicare drug plan can start taking advantage of their new Medicare prescription drug coverage. Since this is a new program for Medicare, you might have questions about how to use your Medicare drug plan. For instance, what if you joined a plan, but haven't received a plan ID card in the mail yet? Or, what if your drugs were covered by Medicaid, and you're not sure how to get your medicines now? Whatever questions you have, Medicare has answers.

First Pharmacy Trip

Here are some tips people with Medicare can use to make sure their first trip to the pharmacy goes smoothly:

- When you first join a Medicare drug plan, you'll get an acknowledgement letter in the mail about a week after you join. Your plan ID card should arrive 3 to 5 weeks later.
- If you need to go to the pharmacy before your ID card arrives, bring the acknowledgement letter from your plan, your Medicare and/or Medicaid card, and a photo ID.
- Save the receipts from your pharmacist.
- For additional assistance, call 1-800-MEDICARE, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

People with Medicare and Medicaid

If your pharmacist is having trouble confirming what plan you're in or whether you also get Medicaid, he can also call a special toll-free number that Medicare set up for pharmacists to get help. People with Medicare who also get Medicaid should be able to get their prescriptions filled with minimal co-payments and no deductibles.

How to Join a Plan

If you haven't joined a Medicare drug plan yet, don't worry! You have until May 15, 2006 to choose and join a plan without having to pay a penalty. So, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048) today to learn about your options for getting the coverage you need, and the convenience and peace of mind you deserve. You can also visit www.medicare.gov on the web, or find personalized counseling at www.eldercare.gov.

This information prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.